

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Center  
Wilkes-Barre, PA



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Outpatient Clinics

Allentown ★ Columbia County ★ Northampton County ★ Sayre  
Schuylkill County ★ Tobyhanna ★ Williamsport

**DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE** - Any time now we could face an unannounced accreditation survey of our Medical Center's Hospital, Long Term Care, and Home Care Programs by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). The survey is expected to take place sometime between February 15<sup>th</sup> and December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The mission of JCAHO is to continuously improve the safety and quality of care provided to the public through the provision of health care accreditation and related services that support performance improvement in health care organizations. The purpose of this survey will be to evaluate our Medical Center's compliance with nationally established Joint Commission standards. The survey results will be used to determine whether, and the conditions under which, accreditation should be awarded the Medical Center.



Roland E. Moore  
Director, WBVAMC

Our survey will take place over 5 days and the areas the surveyors will be looking at will be our Hospital, Long Term Care, Outpatient Services, HBPC, Pharmacy Dispensing, Contracted Home Medical Equipment, and Addictions Program.

All employees recently received a "[JCAHO 2005 Continuous Service Readiness Employee Handbook](#)". Please read it. Notify your supervisor if you haven't received a copy. If you have any questions about the JCAHO Survey process, you may call Gwen Michaels, JCAHO Coordinator/PI Coordinator, at extension 4940.

If a surveyor interviews you, remember to introduce yourself, listen carefully and respond to any questions asked, and if you do not know the answer...explain that you will look it up in the policy manual or go to your supervisor.

***And...remember to wear your ID badge at all times!!!***



Kevin Martin,  
Assistant Chief of  
Police with Nitro

**NITRO PROVIDES SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY** - One of the members of the Wilkes-Barre VAMC's Police Service is K-9 Nitro. Nitro is a five year old black Labrador retriever and is handled by Assistant Chief, Kevin Martin. Nitro has been a member of the VA K-9 Unit since 2000. Nitro is a certified Narcotics and Explosive Detection dog. Nitro was certified in Narcotics Detection by the United States Police Canine Association at the age of ten months old. Approximately 1½ years later, he was certified in Explosive Detection.

During his career, the Medical Center's K-9 team has been called to assist federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The U.S. Secret Service has used Nitro and the K-9 Team on several occasions. This was mostly for dignitary protection. Nitro's duties during dignitary visits included bomb sweeps of airports, motorcades, venues, and hotels. He has also been utilized on protection details for family members of the President and presidential candidates. The DEA and FBI have called on the K-9 Team to assist with narcotics interdictions. On some occasions, these calls were in conjunction with state and local law enforcement assists. Nitro has been called out several times to assist a local law enforcement departments, which do not have a canine. These calls were for bomb threats and narcotics calls. The K-9 Team has assisted local police with bomb threats to schools in their areas. Also, police have called with suspicious packages and threats to businesses and other locations. During his career, Nitro has been directly involved with the seizure of several thousand dollars worth of illegal narcotics and drugs. One call led to the arrest of suspects and the confiscation of fifteen to twenty thousand dollars worth of drugs. The team has also assisted local police with narcotic search in their given school districts.

Nitro has been utilized at the Wilkes-Barre VA on several occasions. He has pulled many shifts at the facility during heightened levels of alert. Nitro has been called in for suspicious packages found in facility areas and/or the parking lots. The team has also been used to conduct narcotic searches in common areas of wards. Nitro has been called to do demonstrations for civic organizations in the surrounding communities.

Nitro is a valuable member of the Wilkes-Barre VA Police Department, and we hope his career will continue for many years to come!



# *NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS*

February 13, thru February 19, 2005

- ♥ The 2005 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans encouraged more than **30 schools** to be creative with Valentine Cards for the veterans!
- ♥ Over **1,000 valentines** were received and distributed within one week!
- ♥ The 2005 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans promoted community awareness to more than **600 visitors within one week!**
- ♥ The 2005 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans was **publicized on a local television station and two newspapers!**

**Sunday** - Marked the kickoff of the **2005 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Annual Program**. This year's program brought uniqueness in recognizing a variety of Army Vietnam Veterans.



A very generous donation of a Viet Nam 5th Special Forces (Airborne) 1st Special Forces (The Green Beret) Uniform and display case was given to the Wilkes-Barre Medical Center.



Rick, a Viet Nam veteran, donated a check in the amount of \$7,500 for veterans to use during community outings. To date, he has donated a total of \$24,000!

Gene Molino, Associate Director, emceed the program and introduced Attorney Thomas Munley - our keynote speaker. Attorney Munley served in the Army during the Vietnam War. He was decorated with the Bronze Star for service against the hostile forces in Viet Nam. He also received the Army Commendation Medal and the Viet Nam Service Cross. Mr. Munley produced several hour-long programs highlighting local veterans. He also serves as the Legal Analyst for WYOU's news segment, "The Law and You".

## Monday



Wyoming Valley Barbershop Harmony Chorus greeted veterans and visitors at the main entrance of the Medical Center.



The Eagles sponsor a helium balloon distribution.



Lake Lehman High School visits veterans with smiles and Valentines.

## Tuesday



Meyers High School brings more Valentines to veterans.



Penn State Nittany Lion (Wilkes-Barre Campus) visits veterans with a **ROARRR...**



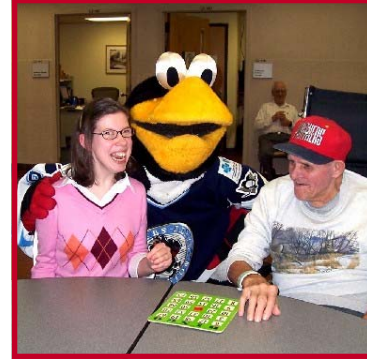
## Wednesday



Wyoming Area Cheerleaders bring *many*, *many* smiles to veterans.



Red Barons Baseball  
Team Mascot - *The Grump* - stopped by to wave hello.



Penguins Hockey Team  
Mascot - *Tux* - shares a laugh  
with a student volunteer and a  
veteran during the weekly  
VAVS Bingo.



King's College Baseball Team receives great baseball tips from veterans for this years season while visiting and distributing valentines.

## Thursday

The Crestwood High School Choir sang as they walked slowly down the hallways of the Nursing Home Care Unit. The Crestwood Student Government distributed valentine to the veterans at the same time.



## Friday

The **VA Voluntary Service Executive Committee** purchased 300 long stem red carnations and gave them to veterans coming into the Medical Center for appointments.



The *USO Show “American Spirit”* provided an afternoon of fabulous entertainment. A group of 40 from the Bureau of Aging Senior Citizen Center assisted with serving refreshments and escort. Everyone enjoyed the show!



A special *thank you* goes out to the 2005 National Salute Committee! They are: Lydia Winter, Geriatrics & Extended Care Svc; Tom Patts, Office of Assoc. Chief of Staff/Office of Nurse Exec.; Jane Maxwell, Fiscal Svc; Bruce Brenner, Joe Greene, and Bill Cooper, Facilities Management Svc.; Joe Marcellini and Mary Beth Hudak, Business Office; Celestine Sisko, Rehab & Prosthetic Svc.; Gloria Recek, Gail Mangan, Deb Schlosser, and Kim Hoge, Voluntary Svc.



**EXPLAINING TESTS** – Patients and families deserve to feel empowered as active participants in their health care. Numerous media campaigns direct the general public to “know your numbers” by encouraging patients to discuss numbers, such as blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, blood glucose, and other tests, with their health care providers. By providing information about tests and diagnostic studies, health care providers partner with patients, allowing them to make informed choices about their health care and manage their illness.

The patient satisfaction survey asks patients if they have been given the opportunity to share in this aspect of their care through the following questions:

- ☒ “Did the provider explain why you needed tests in a way that you could understand?”
- ☒ “After tests were done, did the provider explain the results in a way that you could understand?”

To help patients understand how tests will help them, they need to learn the basic facts about any tests they are asked to have done. Explain to patients the name of the tests being requested and why they are being recommended. Let the patient know when to call for the results. Finally, review the results with the patients in simple words and easy to understand terms.

*~Submitted by Staff Development*

**VETS GET TOP CARE FROM VA** – Patients in the health care system operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) receive significantly better care than private-sector patients, according to a recently released independent study.

The study by RAND, an independent think-tank, found that VA patients were significantly more likely than non-VA patients to receive needed preventative care. The study also found that VA patients with chronic medical problems received the treatment they needed more often than private-sector patients.

They found that about 51 percent of non-VA patients received care that met the latest standards of the healthcare profession, compared with 67 percent for VA patients. For preventative care, such as pneumonia vaccination and certain cancer screenings, 64 percent of VA patients received the appropriate care, compared to only 44 percent in the private sector.

Researchers attributed the difference to technological innovations, such as VA's computerized patient records, and to policies holding top managers accountable for standards in preventative care and the treatment of long-term conditions.

The RAND study, done in cooperation with the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Michigan, was published in the Annals of Internal Medicine. It is available at [www.rand.org/publications](http://www.rand.org/publications).



**COMPLIMENTARY PHONE CALL** - The Office of the Director recently received a complimentary phone call from a patient's wife. The patient is a resident in the Nursing Home Care Unit. He and his wife are “so pleased with the care he is receiving”. The patient's wife wanted everyone to know just how pleased they both are. The patient was transferred from another facility within our VISN and his wife mentioned the care provided here at our facility is much better than he received at the other Medical Center.